



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
September 17, 2020 – 4:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

October 2019-September 2020

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Noah Szugajew, Chair	P	11	0
April Kirk, Vice Chair	P	7	5
Elizabeth Cupido	P	11	0
Christina Disbrow	P	8	3
Mary Kinirons	P	10	1
Richard Morris	P	8	3
Christi Rice	P	10	2
Terra Sickler	P	9	2
Marisol Simon	P	11	0
Dana Somerstein	A	9	2

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Eveline Dsouza, Senior Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development
Simone Flores, CDBG Grants Administrator
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, ProtoType, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of August 25, 2020, there are 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Szugajew called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JULY 13, 2020

Ms. Kinirons noted that on p.9, paragraph 4, Ms. Arieagus was asked to provide the estimated cost of giving SunServe's housing case managers a raise, but no amount was stated in the document. She expressed concern that this constituted an incomplete public record, particularly as the Board then voted to allocate funds to SunServe.

It was determined that Staff would review the recording to clarify whether or not an amount was cited and provide an update to the Board at the next meeting.

IV. CDBG UPDATES

Ms. Flores reported that the 2020-2021 Action Plan has been submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), where it is currently under review. The 2020-2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) contracts are currently with the City's Legal Department and have an execution date of October 1, 2020.

V. HOPWA UPDATES

Ms. Dsouza recalled that the Board had allocated \$40,800 in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO); however, MODCO had declined to accept the allocation, as they received funds through other sources. The \$40,800 may now be reallocated to another recipient.

Chair Szugajew stated that Staff's recommendation was to reallocate these funds to be used for Short-Term Mortgage, Rent, and Utility (STRMU) rental payments. He requested that the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) agencies submit proposals for the funds, which would be reviewed at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Williams stated that after today's Board meeting, an email would be sent to the HOPWA agencies informing them of the available CARES Act funding. She clarified that only activities eligible under the CARES Act can be funded with these dollars. These include activities associated with "preparing for or responding to the coronavirus."

Vice Chair Kirk asked if there is a process to be followed for reallocation of funds. Ms. Williams stated that it would be her preference for the agencies to submit a written budget, which would be provided to the Board members ahead of time for review. The agencies will also be asked to present their proposals at the meeting and respond to questions from the Board.

Chair Szugajew recalled that MODCO had developed a pilot program to provide shared housing for individuals; however, the organization has decided it will instead lease the property to a family. Representatives of MODCO will be invited to attend the October Board meeting and provide additional information on the pilot program.

Jacqueline Stewart, representing MODCO, advised that the pilot program was not successful, as many of the individuals in the program had other issues that made it difficult to provide assistance to them. MODCO has decided instead to lease the home to a working family, whose rent will be based on their income.

Chair Szugajew noted that the Board had committed to funding the pilot program for a set period of time. It was clarified that this contract is set to expire on September 30, 2020. The Board had allocated \$58,000 toward the pilot program in fiscal year (FY) 2020-2021. The members agreed by consensus to the use of their funds for other project-based housing.

Ms. Dsouza noted that the City's current HOPWA contract is set to expire on September 30, 2021. The City is preparing to enter the bidding process, with a new request for proposal (RFP) to go out for bid in February 2021. The bidding process will close in April 2021.

Ms. Williams added that a public planning meeting for HOPWA agencies is typically held in January prior to the bid process. Staff has heard proposals from the Board in the past regarding how this meeting might be structured differently. Because a new RFP cycle will begin, this is an opportune time to determine the direction in which the Board feels the program should go before the January 2021 meeting.

Ms. Williams further clarified that the planning meeting invites other community partners to attend and provide input on the new RFP cycle and the housing services the City can help to provide. There was consensus from the Board members that other service providers can give feedback on what is or is not currently working to help clients.

Ms. Kinirons requested that a copy of the previous RFP be sent to the members so they can review what was included in that document. It was noted that the 2017 RFP had been an extension of a previous RFP from 2014.

Ms. Williams concluded by encouraging the Board members to submit their ideas and suggestions regarding the RFP between now and January 2021. This can help to improve and reshape the HOPWA program in the future. She suggested that a series of focus group meetings could be helpful in improving the program, with a Staff presence to support this process. A proposed timeline for the process can be provided at the next Board meeting.

Chair Szugajew requested a presentation on the HOPWA RFP process and the Board's role in it for newer members.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

It was decided that the 2021 Community Services Board (CSB) meeting dates would be sent to the Board members so they can check availability and confirm those dates at the next meeting.

Chair Szugajew noted that his term is set to expire in November 2020. He recommended that the members begin thinking about Board elections in advance.

Ms. Kinirons requested discussion of the process for managing requests, explaining that she was concerned for allocating any funds to an organization without first seeing a budget or documentation. She asked if there has been a procedure for these requests in the past, or if the Board should seek to establish one now. Mr. Morris recalled that he had raised a similar concern in the past with regard to funding requests brought forward at meetings.

Ms. Williams explained that the Board has the right to make recommendations on the use of HOPWA funds, including whether or not funds should be held in reserve until additional information can be provided. The only entity that can reject proposals brought forth by the Board is the City Commission.

Ms. Williams continued that the Board has the right to request any documentation they feel will help them make more informed decisions. Typically, in the absence of an emergency, the City publishes notice of the availability of funds, and agencies submit formal written proposals for them through the RFP process. Outside the RFP process, when agencies are under contract with the City, they may submit written proposals or requests to the Board. The Board may then ask for any information or documentation from that agency to make an informed decision.

Ms. Kinirons asked what kind of accountability and documentation is provided, when the Board is not given a written proposal, to make sure the funds they allocate are used as requested. Ms. Williams explained that when the Board makes a recommendation for the allocation of funds at a meeting, City Staff then takes that recommendation before the City Commission, which approves or denies the request. If the allocation is approved, Staff then takes the recommendation to the Legal Department and prepares a formal written agreement, including a line item budget that dictates how the funds will be spent and any performance measures or other criteria governing the use of funds.

Ms. Williams also pointed out that programs work with the City on a reimbursement basis: if an agency is to receive funds, they must first spend their own money and then submit documentation requesting reimbursement from the City. If the items are deemed eligible, they are reimbursed. Not all items are determined to be reimbursable.

Ms. Kinirons asked if there are rules governing which representatives of organizations can make funding requests. Ms. Williams replied that most requests come from executive members of organizations. Before a contract can be implemented, an agency's board of directors must provide a resolution authorizing these individuals to enter into agreements.

Ms. Kinirons agreed with Mr. Morris regarding the need for a clearer structure so the Board can make more accountable and informed decisions. Ms. Williams added that while Staff cannot dictate the Board's decisions, their role is to provide guidance so the members' decisions are fully informed and do not violate regulations.

Vice Chair Kirk advised that while the Board understands that Staff continues to do a great deal of work behind the scenes, it is helpful if they are provided with additional documentation before they are asked to make funding decisions. Ms. Kinirons proposed that in the event of an emergency, anyone making requests of the Board should be asked to bring documentation of that emergency in case a same-day decision must be made. Vice Chair Kirk noted that City Staff has made it possible for meetings to continue via communication technology during the ongoing pandemic.

The Board members briefly discussed service on the CSB. Ms. Williams noted that this depends in part upon whether or not a member's appointing City Commissioner is still seated. If that Commissioner is replaced, s/he has six months to decide whether to continue that member's appointment or replace them with a new member. If no new member is appointed during the six-month period, the current member may remain. A member may serve a maximum of six years. She concluded that a copy of the Board's governing Ordinance will be sent to the Board members.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Francisco Gomez, representing Care Resource, encouraged the Board to ensure that housing providers have the capacity, experience, and commitment to assist their clients throughout the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

None.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, ProtoType, Inc.]